
SOUTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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School nurses recognized for service to public school students and staff members

COLUMBIA – Two school nurses have been recognized for their professionalism and service to South Carolina’s public schools.

Andrea Williams, a registered nurse at Gadsden Elementary School in Richland School District One, has been named the School Nurse (RN) of the Year, and Cynthia Halewood, a licensed practical nurse with the Charleston County School District, has been named the School Health LPN of the Year.

The awards are presented annually by the State Department of Education and the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control to a registered nurse and a licensed practical nurse working in a school setting who provide outstanding school health services.

Williams has worked as a school nurse for 14 years. In addition to writing individual health care plans for students with special health needs and providing the daily care needed to keep students in the classroom ready to learn, she attends to emergency needs that arise and helps families secure health resources. She also plans activities that promote nutrition and physical activity. Through an Outdoor Learning Classroom, Williams worked with teachers to help students grow their own fruits and vegetables.

Under Williams’ leadership, Gadsden Elementary School’s Blue Jay Step Team members stay active and healthy by using rhythmic “stepping” motions and learning about healthy snacks. Some students have lost weight since joining the Step Team. As head of the school’s staff wellness program, Williams teaches disaster preparedness and first-aid to colleagues. She is a PTO member and student mentor.

Halewood is the nurse at Thomas Cario Middle School in Mt. Pleasant. She has been providing nursing care for school-aged children for six years. Her focus is also on keeping students in the classroom ready to learn. In addition to meeting the immediate health needs of her students, Halewood often shares information that will improve students’ knowledge about health. She visits classrooms, keeps teachers and parents

abreast of the needs of specific students, and collaborates with community partners to provide health-related educational opportunities for faculty and staff.

As coordinator of staff wellness activities, Halewood leads a variety of activities, including the “Biggest Loser” weight management program, a favorite among her colleagues. Halewood is a member of her school’s crisis team and is responsible for staff training. In addition, she raises funds for cystic fibrosis and juvenile diabetes causes.

The South Carolina Association of School Nurses (SCASN) recently presented Ann Lee, RN, MN, state director of Public Health Nursing with the South Carolina Department of Health & Environmental Control, with the SCASN School Health Services Award. This award is presented annually to honor an individual or entity, other than a school nurse, whose support of school nursing and school health promotion is exemplary.